THE FRAUDS and ABUSES OF THE *COAL-DEALERS* Detected and Expoſed; IN A LETTER TO AN ALDERMAN of *London.*

Nebulo Carbone notandus.

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
Printed for M. COOPER at the *Globe* in *Pater-Noſter-Row.* 1745.
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A

LETTER

TO AN

Alderman of *London*.

SIR,

AS in all popular Aſſemblies, it has been found neceſſary to place ſome Man of Weight and Dignity in the Chair, for the Preſervation of Order and Decorum, ſo ſuch Diſcourſes as relate to public Grievances, can be addreſs'd, with Propriety, to none but ſuch Perſons as by their Influence and Authority can contribute to remove them.

It is for this Reaſon I have taken the Liberty to ſubmit the following Thoughts to your more immediate Conſideration: My own Eyes have convinc'd me that you are not only an able, but an active Magiſtrate.

Under your Direction I have ſeen what us'd to be an annual Voyage of Amuſement and Recreation, reſtor'd to the ſerious and laudable Ends and Purpoſes, for which it was, at firſt, ſo prudentially eſtabliſhed; I have ſeen a due Reſpect requir'd and paid to the Laws, without rendering them a Terror and Grievance to the Subject; I have ſeen Juſtice temper'd with Mercy; I have ſeen Mercy ſeaſon'd with Juſtice.

As, therefore, it is from this Experience of your Character, that I am encourag'd to make this public Addreſs to you; ſo it may be preſum'd, that, out of a due Regard to my own, I ſhall not venture to ſet forth in Print any one Fact which cannot be proved; or take up your Time with Trifles, when you expected Matters of ſome Importance.

I muſt, however, premiſe, that tho' I profeſs to treat of the Grievances which fall on the Conſumers, as well as the Traders

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in Coals, I do not deſign to enlarge on the peculiar Hardſhips ariſing to the Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*, and the many great and populous Towns and Villages in their Neighbourhood, from the various Impoſitions on that Commodity: I ſhall not make it my Buſineſs to complain, that the growing Produce of this Tax has been anticipated by way of Mortgage, which cuts off the very Proſpect of Relief; I ſhall not inſiſt, that, as long as this Tax continues, it may be ſaid, that the calamitous Fire of *London*, which furniſh'd the firſt Pretence for laying it on, continues ſtill to be felt, and to be deplor'd.—The Grievances which I am to confine my Reflections to, are of an inferior Nature; and I have only mentioned theſe others, as ſerving to ſhew how extremely neceſſary it is, to take the proper Precautions, that private Villainies may not inflame and increaſe public Misfortunes.

I am extremely ſenſible, that it is not in the Power of any Magiſtracy, or even any Legiſlature, to make all Men honeſt: But certainly 'tis in the Power of the One, ſo to multiply Checks and Reſtraints on the Diſhoneſt, and of the Other to make ſo perti-

nent an Uſe of them, that Fear may, in a great Meaſure, do the Work of Virtue.

Felony is ſo coarſe a Sin, and obnoxious to ſo heavy a Puniſhment, that even bad Men ſtart with Horror at the very Name of it; but thoſe who are thus ſcrupulous as to *Thefts*, ſcarce boggle at *Frauds*; tho' the laſt is apparently a Crime of the deeper Dye, as adding a Breach of Truſt, to an Invaſion of Property.

It has ever been the Reproach as well as Misfortune of Trade, that Perſons have been found in every Branch of it, who have acted, as if their Profeſſion was but a Licence to cheat with Impunity.

Hence aroſe falſe Weights and Meaſures, and all thoſe innumerable Devices with which the Crafty deceive the Credulous, and at once grow rich and inſolent, in defiance of Law or Religion, Shame or Conſcience.

It is true, theſe Abuſes were ſoon diſcovered and complain'd of; and as every Year almoſt produc'd ſome new Species, ſo every Year, likewiſe, produc'd ſome new Expedient by way of Prevention or Puniſhment.

To falſe Weights and Meaſures a very early and peculiar Attention was paid; and

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if Laws could execute themſelves, ſcarce any Treſpaſs of that Nature could paſs undetected, or unpuniſhed: But this is one of our national Inconveniencies; and nothing is more common than to ſee a Law, that was levelled at ſome notoriouſly-wicked Practice, ſleep in the Execution: Tho' all are Sufferers, nobody will complain; and the Knavery which was modeſt or timorous at firſt, grows harden'd by degrees, derives a ſort of Authority by Cuſtom, and, at laſt, pleads univerſal Practice, in Abarement, againſt the very Statutes themſelves.

To apply what I have ſaid to the Frauds of the Coal-Trade.

About half a Century ago this Buſineſs was carried on in a manner very different from what it is at preſent: The Dealers in that Commodity had not then loſt their antient Name of *Woodmongers*; which it is obvious had been given them, when Wood was the principal Fuel of the City: The more pompous Title of Coal-Merchant had not then been thought of: They lived on the Wharfs, kept Horſes and Carts of their own, bought their Coals at *Billinſgate* of the Maſters of the Ships, and were there

plyed

plyed by the Lightermen for their Buſineſs, that is to ſay, for the Carriage of their Coals from the Ship's Side to the Wharf, as Watermen now ply for Paſſengers at the ſeveral Landing-Places.

In Proceſs of Time, great Ships being employed in the Coal-Trade, whoſe Ladings were too large for any one or two *Woodmongers* either to purchaſe or diſpoſe of, the Lightermen took the Hint to do what the *Woodmongers* could not; by which means from Carriers they, at once, became Traders of a ſuperior Claſs, and found themſelves in a Capacity to treat thoſe who had been their Maſters, as their Cuſtomers; I had like to have ſaid their Dependants and Underſtrappers.

Nor did they ſtop here: For having taken Poſſeſſion of the Hive, they reſolved to keep all the Sweets to themſelves, which they ſoon accompliſhed after this manner:

When a Fleet of Ships was expected in, fifteen of the moſt conſiderable of theſe Upſtart-Engroſſers uſed to hold a Cabal, in which having firſt ſettled the Market-Price to their own Minds, every one ſtaked a Moidore, by way of Gage, that he would not

not make a Breach in the Combination, by giving more for his Coals than the Standard here agreed upon.

If any Ships had out-ſail'd the reſt, and the Maſter had taken the Advantage of his good Luck, to inſiſt on a Shilling or two more in a Chalder than the Cabal had thought proper to allow him, no ſooner did the reſt of the Fleet come in, but the Purchaſer obliged the Maſter to forego his ſaid Advantage, or elſe balk'd the Ship, and nobody elſe would buy the Remainder.

By theſe and ſuch like Means, in leſs than thirty Years, thoſe who had begged for a Lading of Coals, were enabled to keep their Coaches, and found themſelves Maſters of the whole Trade.

But as all who have Power are apt to abuſe it, ſo all Monopolies ſoon become Grievances.

From the Ship-Maſters on one Hand, and the Dealers on the other, the Miſchiefs ariſing from the arbitrary Conduct of theſe Men, at laſt, affected the Conſumer; and that in ſo ſenſible a manner, as to give Riſe to an Act of Parliament of Queen *Anne*, *cap.* 23. to open the Trade, whereby all Contracts between Coal-Owners, Lighter-

men,

men, &c. were rendered void, and all Perſons who had Craft, were authoriſed either to work them themſelves, tho' not free of the River, or elſe to employ a Freeman to work them in their Stead.

For a while, like all other Acts of this Nature, this had a wholſome Effect, by putting a Stop to the iniquitous Combinations before ſpoken of.

But the Reformation did not laſt long; for the Coal Trade, being ſtill carried on in large Ships of three, four, and five Hundred Tons Burthen, which being too large a Quantity for the *Foreigners*, as they are call'd, or the lower Rank of *Lightermen*, who have neither Craft, nor Cuſtomers to diſpoſe of ſo large a Quantity, the Bulk of the Trade ſtill continued in the Hands of thoſe overgrown *Gentlemen*, for ſo it ſeems they muſt now be ſtil'd: who dealing for the whole Frieght of theſe Ships, will not ſuffer any body elſe to have a Part, but upon ſuch Terms, as leaves the Purchaſer, almoſt as much at their Mercy, as he was before the Act againſt Combinations took place.

But tho' thus unfortunately, this Act did not remove the Miſchiefs before complain'd of,

of, it made way for others which fall ſo heavily on the fair Trader, as well as the Conſumer, that they ought to be fully expos'd, in order to be ſpeedily cur'd.

The laying the Trade open to all Adventurers invited many Perſons to engage in it, who not having been brought up to it in a regular Way, were from thence called *Foreigners*. And this Evil, as in ſome meaſure it may be call'd, obtain'd the eaſier, and ſpread the wider, thro' the Indiſcretion of thoſe that had Wharfs, Carts, *&c.* who became the Hacknies of any who would employ them.

Coal-Merchants now began to multiply apace: If a Footman had been preferr'd to be a Runner to a Coal-Owner to diſtribute Bills, and collect ſtraggling Debts, why, in a ſhort Time, he commences Beau, puts on trimm'd Cloaths, and ſets himſelf up for a *Coal-Merchant*. If a Pawn-Broker, by the Overflowings of his Gains, has more Caſh in Hand, than he can immediately diſpoſe of, why he gives it Vent, by trafficking in Coals, and gilds over his own dirty Buſineſs with the more reputable Title of *Coal-Merchant*.

Thus Perſons of all Buſineſſes, and of no Buſineſs, have taken Sanctuary in this: But of theſe new Adventurers, the Servants out of great Families are by far the Majority; and ſome of theſe are even permitted to carry on the Buſineſs Abroad, while they hold their Places, and receive their Wages at Home; which, if they dealt honeſtly, they would reap abundantly the moſt Advantage from: For, on that Condition, I defy the cunningeſt of theſe Pedlars, *alias Coal-Merchants*, to make above four *per Cent.* of their Money, which every Body will be ſenſible of, who conſiders, that they muſt pay Lighterage, Wharfage, and Carriage, which are the Woodmonger's Profits, before they can put in for their own.

And here occurs the great Conſideration which led me to this Undertaking, *viz.* To detect and expoſe the Frauds and ſiniſter Practices, by which theſe People are enabled to turn the Penny ſo much to their own Advantage.

In the firſt Place, then, the notable Coal-Merchant-Domeſtics, before ſpoken of, ſet out with obliging all their Lord's, or Maſter's, Tradeſmen, to purchaſe Coals of them, and likewiſe to take ſuch Meaſure as they thought

thought proper to allow, under the Penalty of loſing his Lordſhip's Cuſtom.——

But let the plain Matter of Fact ſpeak for itſelf, as follows:

I. A certain Perſon ſolicited a neighbouring Tradeſmen to take his Coals of a Friend of his, if he was not particularly engaged already: The Neighbour replied, he was; to a Coal-Merchant, who, tho' himſelf a Valet de Chambre to a certain Nobleman, had the Modeſty to keep a Fellow in Livery to ſerve Coals by the Peck: That having a Bill upon his Lordſhip, he had bought ſeveral Chalders of him, in virtue of which the ſaid Bill was payed forthwith. But what Meaſure had you? rejoins the other.— Oh, ſays the Tradeſman, I am under no Pain upon that Head, for I will take care to have Coals cheap enough, as long as I continue to ſerve his Lordſhip. And yet an Information has been lodged againſt this very Man for taking Money for *ſeven Chalders* of Coals, which, upon being re-meaſured, were found to want one Buſhel of *ſix Chalders*.

II. There is one Mr. *N*—, Butler to —— in *Groſvenor-ſtreet*, who, commencing Coal-

Merchant, in Partnerſhip with a Man who keeps a *Chandler's Shop* in the Neighbourhood, and having ſecured his Lord's Cuſtom, and that of the Family's, as well as Tradeſmen, under his Lordſhip's Influence, had the Addreſs to get one Mr. *H*———, the Under-Butler in the ſaid Family, preferred to be Upper-Butler to a certain young Nobleman, upon his going to Houſe-keeping, it may be preſumed on the *Condition* that he ſhould procure him the Cuſtom of the Family, and all that had any Dependance upon it: For ſuch was the Conſequence: And how much the Great and Rich are Sufferers by this indiſcreet Indulgence, may be gathered from the Circumſtance juſt related, and from thoſe which are yet to be explained.

III. There was one *P*——, late of the *Strand*, who, having been detected in ſelling a Quantity of Coals to a Perſon of Faſhion, which were very conſiderably ſhort of Meaſure, pleaded, that it was very hard he ſhould be obliged to pay the Fine; for he had given thirty Guineas to the Steward, and had no other way to reimburſe himſelf.

IV. A certain Perſon who had purchaſed the Good-Will of a Wharf, received

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an Order to ſend in a Ton of *Scotch* Coal to a Lady, who had been a Standing Cuſtomer to the ſaid Wharf; but not being in the Secret, he ſent in the full Weight; which, for the firſt Time, the Hole would not contain: The Conſequence of which was, that the Steward had not the Face to apply for his uſual Perquiſite, and ſo thought it adviſeable to deal for the future with a *Brother of the Cloth*, who underſtood the Method of Poundage.

V. A certain great Man near *Groſvenor-Square*, had given Orders to one of theſe *Merchants* to lay him in forty Chalders of Coals, to be in Readineſs againſt his Family came to Town; who took the Opportunity not only to buy them at the cheapeſt Time of the Year, but of the cheapeſt Sort of Coals; for, as I have been inform'd, they did not ſtand him in above Twenty-four Shillings *per* Chalder, one Chalder with another; or, all Charges included, Twenty-eight Shillings and Five-pence *per* Chalder: Now at that very Time, the beſt *Tanfield-Moor* Coals were ſold at Twenty-ſix Shillings in the Pool, or Thirty-one delivered in: But, as this honeſt *Merchant* had great Obligations to the Family, he thought fit

to

to charge his L——p Thirty-two: ſo that the Total of his Bill was Sixty-four Pounds; by which he would have gain'd Seven Pounds three Shillings and Four-pence, even on the Suppoſition that his Meaſure had been fair; but inſtead of ſending in Forty-two Chalders, which, at Twenty-one to the Score, he ſhould have done, he actually loaded but Thirty-four Chalders. Add therefore, nine Pounds twelve Shillings, for ſix Chalders ſhort, to the ſeven Pounds three Shillings and Four-pence mentioned above, it appears the whole Profit upon the Jobb was ſixteen Pounds fifteen and Four-pence, which is juſt nine Pounds twelve Shillings more than the noble Purchaſer would have paid, if he had dealt with a regular Trader.

And ſo I take my Leave of theſe Coal-Merchants of the Cloth.

I come now to thoſe equally honeſt Men, who have their Receipt of Cuſtom in ſuch Places as *St. Giles's*, *Tyburn Road*, and the other great Iſſues of the Town; over whoſe Doors is writ in Capitals, COALS SOLD WHOLESALE AND RETAIL AS CHEAP AS AT THE WATER SIDE.

The

The Snares of theſe People are ſet for their poor Neighbours, and for Country People, who ſend their own Carts for the Coals they want; which being generally but a ſmall Quantity, it is not thought worth while to be at the Expence of re-meaſuring them. There is however one Record forth-coming, which explains by what Method they are thus able to under-ſell the whole Trade: For in a Quantity of Coals, ſold by one of theſe notable Perſons, for eighteen Buſhels, it appeared there were but three ſhort: And of what Conſequence ſo immoderate an Exciſe as a Sixth is in the Courſe of Trade, there is no need of Figures to demonſtrate.

To ſpeak plainly, either the Impudence, or the Generoſity of theſe People is ſcarce to be parallel'd; for they give Twenty-eight Shillings a Chalder themſelves, beſides which it is well known, that Wharfage and Carriage, in open Carts, ſtand them in Two Shillings and Three-pence a Chalder more, and yet they ſell them again for Twenty-eight Shillings; profeſſing, at the ſame Time, that they follow the Buſineſs for a Livelihood, and not by way of Amuſement.

We are next to take a Trip acroſs the Park to the Water-Side; and there we ſhall find

find the like Abuſe, practis'd in a different Way; that is to ſay, by *under-ſiz'd Sacks*; for which one Man in particular is become ſo notorious, that he is commonly call'd, *The Pudding-Sack-Man.*

But in order to render this Kind of Fraud more intelligible, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that by the Act which obliged the Coal-Dealers to make uſe of Linnen Sacks, inſtead of Hair Sacks, not only the Breadth and Length of the ſaid Sacks were aſcertain'd, but it was required that they ſhould be ſtamp'd by Authority. Theſe Precautions, for a while, had their due Effect; the Dealer found himſelf oblig'd to be honeſt, and the Purchaſer had his Pennyworth for his Penny. But Juſtice ſeldom reigns amongſt us for any conſiderable Term; and Roguery is as often the Parent of Ingenuity as Neceſſity.

Thus, it being ſoon diſcovered, that the piecing theſe Parliament Sacks, as they wore out, down the Sides, made them look bigger than thoſe which had received no ſuch Helps, the New were put to the Torture, and made to undergo the ſame Operation: For having been firſt ſtamp'd according to Law, they were artificially diminiſh'd

miniſh'd by contracting the Seams according to the Size of the Owner's Conſcience; and then piec'd over like the Old, as if by way of Strengthener; which at once added the neceſſary Bulk, and ſerv'd to conceal the Fraud; which oftentimes amounts to half a Buſhel in a Sack.

There is a Jury that goes about occaſionally to detect the falſe Weights and Meaſures: Theſe happen'd to ſtop the Cart of a Dealer that liv'd in the *Strand*, and finding the Sack they meaſur'd to want half a Buſhel, they return'd the Man to the Court of *Weſtminſter:* But the Dealer very artfully evaded the Penalty, by entering in his Books three Quarters of a Chalder inſtead of a Chalder.

By theſe, and ſuch like wicked Practices, the Town is continually impos'd upon; I believe, I may ſay, ſcarce a Day paſſes without having more or leſs to anſwer for: Many have been lately detected; and ſome farther Inſtances deſerve to be laid before the Public; as a Terror to thoſe that ſell, and a Warning to thoſe that purchaſe.

1. Upon remeaſuring a Chalder ſold at *Chelſea*, it was found to contain but Twenty-ſeven Buſhels inſtead of Thirty-ſix.

2. In three Chalders, ſold from out of the *Strand*, there was a Deficiency of twelve Buſhels.

3. In five Chalders ſold in the Neighbourhood of *Red Lion-Square*, eighteen Buſhels; the ſame Perſon in nine Buſhels, one ſhort.

4. In two Chalders order'd into the Workhouſe, by the preſent truly humane and compaſſionate Officers of *St. Paul's Covent Garden*, eight Buſhels.

5. Out of half a Chalder, given by Order of the ſaid Officers to a poor Widow who had three Children to provide for, and a Mother dying before her Eyes, two Buſhels were exciſed.

6. One Perſon that writes over his Door, COALS SOLD AS CHEAP AS AT THE WATER

WATER SIDE, near *St. Giles's Pound*; in three Chalders, nine Buſhels ſhort; another, near the End of *Swallow-Street*, in four Chalders, thirteen Buſhels ſhort; and one the upper End of *Drury-Lane*, in ſix Chalders, thirty-nine Buſhels ſhort; and the honeſt Mr. *D*....., of *Weſtminſter*, thirty-ſeven Buſhels ſhort in five Chalders. But we hope the Gentlemen of *Scotland-Yard* won't forget one of their Brothers, in ſix Chalders being eighteen Buſhels ſhort; and in a Ton of *Scotch* Coal four Hundred Weight. Likewiſe two of the greateſt *Scotch* Coal Dealers, not far from *Mill-Bank*, five Hundred Weight ſhort, in each of them a Ton: (ſo it may be ſuppoſed their Weights and Sacks agree, one of theſe being particularly diſtinguiſh'd in *page* 20.) And what ſeeems odd, that a P——n B——r ſhould be honeſter than theſe by four to one, for he ſent almoſt nineteen Hundred Weight for a Ton. But we muſt not forget a Valet de Chambre's Clerk, that is turn'd Coal Merchant near *Burleigh-Street*, (who keeps up the laudable Rules of his late Maſter, ſee *page* 15.) being but nine Bu-

ſhels ſhort in two Chalders; and a Number more that will be made publick in a little Time. But to do Juſtice to the reſt of the Dealers in *Weſtminſter*, their Names do neither of them begin with an *H.* or *F.*

I have already mention'd *Pawn-Broker-Coal-Merchants*: Of one of theſe, a poor Man beſpoke three Chalders, for a Perſon who lodg'd in his Houſe; and, at the ſame Time aſk'd him, what would be the Advantage to himſelf, if he took Five. The Pawnbroker anſwer'd, three Sacks: Which encouraged the poor Man to ſend his Wife with certain Goods to this very Pawn-Broker's, to raiſe preſent Money to purchaſe two Chalders more: Which he did; but, upon remeaſuring the ſaid five Chalders, it appear'd he had reckon'd without his Hoſt; for tho' he had the running Intereſt to pay for the Money he thus had borrow'd, he had not the three Sacks which was the Motive for his taking it up at ſo dear a Rate.

There ſtill remains another Path of Miſchief to be traced; which I ſhall but juſt open, and haſten to a Concluſion, *viz.*

The

The Rogueries practiced by the Bargemen, who are employ'd by the Inhabitants on each Side of the River upwards, to purchaſe Coals for them in the *Pool*.

And theſe are of two Sorts.

1. By overcharging them in the Price.

2. By making ſhort Meaſures: Which laſt Fraud they practiſe in a Manner ſo different from thoſe which are purſued on Shore, that I cannot excuſe myſelf from giving a Hint or two, by way of Explanation. As thus: If a Bargeman has an Order to load a Score, which, as before ſpecify'd, ought to be Twenty-one Chalders, it is uſual for them to load no more than Seventeen and a Half, and oftener but Seventeen and a Vat; which is a Quarter.

It ought, however, to be obſerved, to the Honour of the Lightermen of great Credit and Buſineſs, that they will not ſuffer them to be guilty of any ſuch Baſeneſs when employed for them; and in particular there is one Mr. *A. B.* who has ſeveral times refuſed to ſhew them the leaſt Countenance on theſe iniquitous Occaſions.

But

But to get over this Difficulty, when they have Orders for a Score, they ſend down their Craft with about two Chalders of Coals on board, to which they add fifteen Chalders and three Vat, which they ſell for a Score; and ſo the Lighterman, on whoſe Account they load, is deceived, and the Cuſtomer cheated of three Chalders and a Vat.

And, finally, when thoſe Bargemen, who live higher up the Country, receive Orders from a Lighterman, or Woodmonger, to load a Score, they pretend to buy a Chalder and a Half for their own Uſe; but before they arrive at the Place where the Coals are to be delivered, they contrive to make a Sale of five Chalders on their own Accounts, and their Cuſtomers muſt be content with the Remainder.

It is now neceſſary to ſhew what Care the Legiſlature has taken to ſecure the Subject againſt theſe Impoſitions; and thro' what expreſs Limitations theſe Men have the Preſumption to make their Way, as likewiſe to what ſevere Penalties they are liable for ſo doing.

By the 16 and 17 *Car.* II. *cap.* 2. It is enacted, That all Sorts of Sea-Coals brought into

into the River of *Thames* and ſold, ſhall be ſold by the Chalder, containing thirty-ſix Buſhels heaped, and according to the Buſhel ſealed for that Purpoſe at *Guildhall*, *London*; and ſo proportionably. And *2dly*, That all other Coals, commonly ſold by Weight, after 112 Pounds to the Hundred, upon Pain of Forfeiture of all the Coals, otherwiſe ſold, or expoſed to Sale, by any Woodmonger, or Retailer of Coals, and the double Value thereof; to be recovered in any Court of Record, or by Complaint to the Lord-Mayor of *London*, and Juſtices of the Peace within the City and Liberties, or any Juſtices of the Peace of the ſeveral Counties, where ſuch Coals ſhall be expoſed to Sale; who, upon due Proof, upon Oath, may convict the Offenders, and give Warrant under their Hands and Seals, for levying the Forfeitures, one Half to the Perſon complaining, the other Half for the Poor, *&c.*

This Statute was originally made only for three Years: But in the Reign of *Will.* and *Mary* it was revived, and rendered PERPETUAL,

By

By another Statute, which was paſſed in the ſecond Year of his preſent Majeſty, it is farther enacted, "That whoever, from and "after the 1ſt Day of *Auguſt*, 1730, ſhall "not conſtantly keep and uſe ſuch a Buſhel, and ſuch Sacks as herein before deſcribed, and no other, or ſhall not ſo fill "their Coal-Sacks from ſuch Buſhels, or "ſhall otherwiſe offend againſt the true "Intent and Meaning of this Act, ſhall "for every ſuch Offence forfeit and pay "the Sum of fifty Pounds; and if any Servant or Servants of ſuch Dealer or Dealers in Coals ſhall, from and after the 1ſt "Day of *Auguſt*, 1730, fill ſuch Coals "into Sacks, without firſt duly meaſuring the ſame by ſuch Buſhel, ſuch "Servant or Servants ſhall for every ſuch "Offence be committed to the Houſe of "Correction, there to be kept to hard La"bour for any Time not exceeding thirty "Days, nor leſs than fourteen Days."

Thus, Sir, agreeable to my firſt Deſign, I have laid before you a Sketch of thoſe private Abuſes, which, by their frequent Practice, are become a public and general Grievance: And how deeply they affect the-

Fair

Fair Trader; how heavily, tho' inſenſibly, they fall upon the Conſumer, and how loudly they call for Puniſhment and Prevention, the common Senſe of every Man will ſufficiently conceive.

The ſame Frauds which are practiſed upon the Chalder deſcend to the Peck, and both Poor and Rich are exciſed alike.

In Juſtice then to the Rich, in Mercy to the Poor, and for the Credit of Government, which is underſtood to extend its Care and Protection to all, the Laws ſhould be put in Force, and every honeſt Expedient ſhould be uſed to preſerve the Subject in general from Oppreſſion, and to provide that the poor and honeſt Tradeſman might have the ſame Chance to thrive by his Induſtry, as the rich and abandoned Knave.

Sure I am, Sir, that if any honeſt and effectual Expedient, to anſwer theſe wholeſome and ſeaſonable Ends, can be propoſed by way of Supplement to the Laws, it will naturally and neceſſarily meet with Countenance and Encouragement from you.

And, as for my own Part, however I may have provoked and offended the rotten

Part of the Coal-Dealers, by detecting and exposing their Enormities; however I may be maligned and aspersed on that Account, I shall always reflect with Pleasure upon this humble, tho' honest Endeavour, to be serviceable to my Fellow-Subjects.

I am, with all imaginable Respect,

SIR,

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

FINIS.